

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT
Regarding Obtaining Licensure as a Structural Engineer in California
Beginning in 2011

The examinations that are accepted by the California Board for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors (Board) to qualify individuals for licensure as a Structural Engineer will be changing in 2011.

Beginning with the April 2011 exam administration, the primary structural engineering licensure exam accepted by the California Board will be the new 16-hour Structural Engineering Examination developed by the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES) [the “NCEES SE exam”]. This exam is scheduled to first be administered in April 2011. Information about the NCEES SE exam is available on the NCEES website at http://www.ncees.org/Exams/PE_exam/PE_Structural_exam.php. The last administration of the NCEES Structural II examination [the “NCEES SE II exam”] was in October 2010.

In addition to taking and passing the NCEES SE exam, applicants for licensure as a Structural Engineer in California must also take and pass a California state-specific structural engineering exam. The Board recognizes that there are applicants that have passed the NCEES SE II exam and have not yet passed the current 8-hour California Structural Engineering Seismic Examination [the “CSESE exam”]. For these applicants, the last administration of the current 8-hour CSESE exam will be in October 2011.

To satisfy the requirement for a California state specific structural examination, a new California Structural Laws and Rules Exam [the “CSLRE exam”] is currently under development. The CSLRE exam will first be offered beginning in late 2011. Details about this new exam, such as the format, length, and reference list, will be posted on the Board’s website when they become available.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. My application for a structural engineer license has been approved, but I have not passed either the NCEES SE II exam or the CSESE exam. What are my options?

A1. You will need to take and pass both the NCEES SE exam and the CSLRE exam. The new 16-hour NCEES SE exam will first be administered in California in April 2011, and the new CSLRE exam will be offered beginning in late 2011.

Q2. I have passed the NCEES SE II exam but have not passed the CSESE exam. If I have not passed the CSESE exam by October 2011, can I get credit for the NCEES SE II exam that I have already passed?

A2. NO. The NCEES SE II is part of the current requirements for licensure as a Structural Engineer in California and is used only in conjunction with the CSESE exam. When the CSESE exam is discontinued after the October 2011 exam administration, all candidates will be required to pass the NCEES SE exam and the CSLRE exam to become licensed as a Structural Engineer.

Q3. I have passed the CSESE exam but have not passed the NCEES SE II exam. What options do I have?

A3. Your only option is to pass the NCEES SE exam.

Q4. If I have passed the CSESE exam but not the NCEES SE II exam, can I use my CSESE exam as credit for an 8-hour portion of the NCEES SE exam?

A4: NO. The NCEES SE exam is a separate examination and you MUST receive a passing score on both 8-hour portions in order to be considered as having passed the NCEES SE exam. However, you do not need to take both 8- hour portions during the same exam administration; you may pass the two 8-hour portions separately.

Q5. Does passage of the NCEES SE exam make it possible to be licensed in other states?

A5. We cannot offer a response to that question. Each state sets their own licensing requirements. You would need to contact the licensing agencies in the other states in which you would like to be licensed to determine their requirements.

Q6. When and how often will the NCEES SE exam be offered in California?

A6. The NCEES SE exam will be offered for the first time in April 2011, and at least once a year after that time. Budget considerations will determine if the exam will be offered in October 2011, and if the exam will be offered once or twice a year in subsequent years. Information regarding the exam schedules is posted on the Board's website and will be updated as more specific information becomes available.

Q7. What will be the fee to gain admission to the NCEES SE exam?

A7. The current fee to obtain a license as a Structural Engineer in California is \$275.

Q8. I have taken and passed the NCEES SE II and the Washington State SE III. Are those exams accepted for structural engineer licensing in California?

A8. YES, these two exams are accepted for comity licensing as a structural engineer in California.

Q9. When will the CSLRE exam be administered in California?

A9. The first CSLRE exam will be administered in late 2011.

Q10. I do not have a California Civil PE license. Am I still required to have this license to apply for a Structural Engineer license in California?

A10. YES. The requirements for licensing as a structural engineer in California have not changed. You must still first be licensed as a Civil Engineer in California before applying for licensure as a Structural Engineer. Only the exams used to qualify for licensure as a Structural Engineer are changing. Go to <http://www.pels.ca.gov/applicants/seappintro.shtml> for additional information regarding becoming licensed as a Structural Engineer in California.

Q11. What are the exam requirements to become licensed as a Structural Engineer in California?

A11. You must have taken and passed any one of the following three pairs of exams in order to be licensed as a Structural Engineer in California:

- NCEES SE II exam and CSESE exam

- NCEES SE II exam and Washington State SE III exam
- NCEES SE exam and CSLRE exam

Q12. I have taken and passed the 8-hour NCEES Structural I exam [the “NCEES SE I exam”] and the 8-hour NCEES SE II exam. Are these two exams accepted instead of the NCEES SE exam since they equal a 16-hour exam in structural engineering?

A12. NO. The NCEES SE I exam is accepted for licensure as a Civil Engineer in California in place of the NCEES Civil PE exam. The NCEES SE I exam is considered to be an entry-level exam for initial licensure as a Professional Engineer. The Structural Engineer license is considered a mastery-level license and is tested at the mastery-level. The NCEES SE exam is considered to be a mastery-level exam. Candidates who took only the NCEES SE I exam and NCEES SE II exam would not have the depth of seismic testing required for the California Structural Engineer license. Therefore, all California structural engineer candidates are required to take and pass the NCEES SE exam.

Q13. Why is the California Board requiring the CSLRE exam in addition to the new NCEES SE exam? I thought the Board was eliminating the state-specific structural engineer exam to facilitate licensure by comity?

A13. Section 6763.1 of the Professional Engineers Act (Business and Professions Code) requires that, in addition to a national exam, all structural engineer applicants must take and pass a California supplemental exam that tests them on their “knowledge of state laws, rules, and regulations, and of seismicity and structural engineering unique to the practice in this state.” In 2009, the California Board sponsored legislation to eliminate the statutory language requiring the California supplemental exam as required by Section 6763.1. However, even though this change was supported by the Structural Engineer Association of California, objections to the changes by two other professional groups caused the Legislature to remove the language from the legislative bill. Therefore, the Board is still required by law to administer a California supplemental exam as a component for licensure as a Structural Engineer. The Board is currently developing the CSLRE exam to test applicants on their “knowledge of state laws, rules, and regulations, and of seismicity and structural engineering unique to the practice in this state” in conjunction with the NCEES SE exam.

Q14. When can I file an application to take the NCEES SE exam in California?

A14. If you are a first-time applicant for licensure as a Structural Engineer, your application must be postmarked by, or personally delivered to the Board office on, December 17, 2010. If you have previously submitted an application but have not passed the NCEES SE II exam, you will need to submit a refile application to take the April 2011 NCEES SE exam. The refile application must be postmarked by, or personally delivered to the Board office on, January 21, 2011. ALL applicants (new and refile) must also register with NCEES.